

Part 423 - National Onboarding Framework Policy

Subpart A - Introduction

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423.1 Introduction

The national onboarding framework policy allows for a more consistent and thorough approach to integrating new employees into their jobs. This policy applies to all employees who are new to NRCS, whether permanent or student employees, and to all employees who are transferring jobs within NRCS. Successful onboarding of employees leads to higher employee productivity, better employee retention rates, and a sense of identity to NRCS. This process follows a new employee for the first year of his or her new job.

423.2 Purpose

- A. The purpose of the National Onboarding Framework is to—
- (1) Provide a concise and consistent process for bringing new employees into their new job across the board.
 - (2) Provide new employees with a sense of culture and belonging to NRCS.
 - (3) Provide the employee with the resources to become a productive employee quickly.
 - (4) Increase employee engagement and retention.
- B. The National Onboarding Framework is designed to be flexible and allows for some customization of the letters and templates provided. Many of the components are mandatory under Department Regulation 4720-001, dated June 2011. Those mandatory components are as follows:
- (1) Use of the USDA Onboarding Portal for online forms
 - (2) Supervisor welcome letter
 - (3) Tentative and final offer letters
 - (4) Providing information and completing forms on the first day
- C. This framework also satisfies the requirements of the Office of Personnel Management's End-to-End Hiring Initiative.

423.3 Descriptions

- A. National Onboarding Framework.—This framework contains a handbook and resources needed to implement a comprehensive, pilot-tested onboarding program. This includes the following:
- (1) The handbook is a comprehensive document that lays out how an employee should be brought on board within NRCS.
 - (2) USDA Departmental Onboarding Portal is an online Web site that is the first stop for new employees to find specific forms and information-technology-related security tests.
 - (3) The NRCS New Employee Web site has specific NRCS-related documents, forms, tools, and frequently asked questions.
 - (4) Checklists for all employees involved in the onboarding process.
- B. Onboarding.—Onboarding is the process of integrating and acculturating new employees into the organization and providing them with the tools, resources and knowledge to become successful and productive.
- C. New Employee.—Refers to the employee who is being offered a new position. This person may be brand new to the Federal Government and NRCS, a current NRCS who is receiving a promotion, or a person who is a current Government employee but new to NRCS.

423.4 Responsibilities

- A. Deputy Chiefs, division directors, and State Conservationists are responsible for—
 - (1) Ensuring that the onboarding process is adopted in their own Area, division, or State.
 - (2) Meeting with new employees within the first month of their employment to welcome them to the team.
- B. The supervisor is responsible for—
 - (1) Direct employee supervision.
 - (2) Sending a welcome letter to new employee.
 - (3) Welcoming new employee to the office and following new onboarding process.
 - (4) Following the supervisor checklist.
- C. The sponsor is responsible for—
 - (1) Welcoming the new employee and making contact with the new employee prior to start date. The sponsor should be located in the same office or a nearby office to the new employee.
 - (2) Answering any questions that the new employee may have or directing them to where they may find the correct answer.
 - (3) Following the sponsor checklist.
- D. Civil Rights Committee member is a person on the State Civil Rights Committee or Civil Rights Division for National Headquarters and is responsible for—
 - (1) Informing the new employee about the State's Civil Rights Committee.
 - (2) The functions of civil rights in NRCS.
 - (3) Serving as another welcoming person to the new employee.
 - (4) Following the Civil Rights Committee member checklist.
- E. Human resources is the person located in the Human Resources Division of NRCS. Often, this person would be the first person the new employee will speak to. Human resources is responsible for—
 - (1) Sending out initial letter to new employee.
 - (2) Following the human resources checklist.
- F. Leadership team member is responsible for—
 - (1) Working with the Civil Rights Committee chairperson to assign a Civil Rights Committee member to welcome the new employee.
 - (2) Identifying a sponsor who is located in or near the same location as the new employee.

423.5 Benefits of Onboarding

- A. The onboarding process is essential for recruitment and retention. It is often the first welcome into the agency after recruitment has occurred and shows a new employee that NRCS has a procedure in place to make them feel welcomed and have a culture that accepts them.
- B. For employee retention, having a consistent framework that is used across the country will allow for all new employees to have a similar experience into NRCS and our culture. This process will also allow for all our employees who are involved to have a unified and known system of bringing a new employee into their office. Additional benefits to the new employee and the other employee's involved in the process are as follows:
 - (1) It builds a sense of NRCS family and culture among all the employees.
 - (2) A known process allows for supervisors, sponsors, and civil rights members to use the same tools to welcome a new employee on at any time.
 - (3) It provides a better understanding of what is involved in welcoming a new employee by all employees.

423.6 Onboarding Process

The process for onboarding is laid out in the Onboarding Framework Handbook and associated tools. This is the process that should be followed for all employees entering new jobs. The information can be

found online at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/careers> on the "New Employee" page and also on the Talent Management Division SharePoint page.

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